

Message Text

PAGE 01 MANILA 00998 260616Z

15

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O R 260540Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0639

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

CINCPAC

S E C R E T MANILA 0998

EXDIS

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MARR, MOPS, RP, CH

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE POSITION WITH RESPECT TO SPRATELY ISLANDS

REF: MANILA 0859

1. ON MORNING JANUARY 26, I RECEIVED AN AIDE MEMOIRE FROM FONSEC ROMULO FORWARDING THE TEXT OF A CONFIDENTIAL CABLE RECEIVED FROM PHIL REP AT UN REPORTING CONVERSATION WITH DEPUTY CHINESE REP. TEXT OF PHIL CABLE SENT SEPTTEL, BUT ESSENCE CONTAINED IN ITS LAST SENTENCE IN WHICH CHINA ASSERTS "IT IS PREPARED TO DEFEND ITS RIGHT OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER CHINESE TERRITORIES INCLUDING THE PARACEL AND SPRATELY ISLANDS".

2. THIS CHINESE POSITION CONFORMS WITH PEKING'S PREVIOUSLY STATED PUBLIC POSITION AND DRAWS NO RPT NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN PARACELS AND SPRATLEY. INFERENCE COULD THEREFORE BE DRAWN THAT CHINESE ACTION RE SPRATLEYS WILL BE SAME AS EARLIER ACTION RE PARACELS.

3. FROM WHAT I CAN LEARN FROM LOCAL U.S. NAVY
SECRET

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REPRESENTATIVES, U.S. INTELLIGENCE WAS SURPRISED BY SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF SIGNIFICANT CHINESE NAVAL FORCES IN PARACELS AND DID NOT RPT NOT HAVE USEFUL FOREWARNING OF MILITARY ACTION AGAINST GVN UNITS BEFORE IT

OCCURRED. MOREOVER, FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND OF CURRENT U.S. SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITY, WE DO NOT RPT NOT MAINTAIN 24 HOUR WATCH ON SEA APPROACHES TO SPRATLEYS. FROM THESE FACTS, I CONCLUDE THERE IS REASONABLE POSSIBILITY OF SURPRISE CHINESE ACTION AGAINST SPRATLEY GROUP WITH INADEQUATE U.S. INTELLIGENCE ALERT.

4. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT RPT NOT YET HAVE OFFICIAL DEFINITIVE INFORMATION ON PHIL DEPLOYMENTS IN SPRATLEYS, OUR PRELIMINARY SOUNDINGS INDICATE THAT THERE IS FULL COMPANY OF PHILIPPINE MARINES STATIONED ON A GROUP OF ISLANDS AND ATOLLS AT 115 DEGREES E. 11 DEGREES N. WITHIN EASY STRIKING DISTANCE FROM THE PARACELS. THE REASON IT IS TAKING SOME TIME TO DETERMINE THESE FACTS MORE EXACTLY IS THAT I HAVE DELIBERATELY REFRAINED FROM SEEKING THE INFORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY IN ABSENCE OF AUTHORITATIVE INTERPRETATION OF U.S. DEFENSE OBLIGATIONS REQUESTED REFTEL.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: I REPEAT MY PREVIOUS REQUESTS FOR (A) AUTHORITATIVE INTERPRETATION OF U.S. OBLIGATIONS TO "ACT" IF PHIL FORCES ARE ATTACKED IN SPRATLEYS; (B) ASSURANCES THAT U.S. CONDUCTING ADEQUATE SURVEILLANCE TO GUARD AGAINST SURPRISE ATTACK; AND (C) DEMARCHE TO PEKING TO WARN CHINESE THAT MILITARY ACTION AGAINST PHILIPPINE FORCES WOULD ENGAGE U.S. OBLIGATIONS UNDER OUR MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY. IN ADDITION TO THESE ACTIONS, I REQUEST AUTHORITY TO CONSULT WITH PHILIPPINE OFFICIALS WITHIN CONTEXT MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY TO DETERMINE MORE PRECISELY WHAT PHIL INTENTIONS ARE AND TO ADVISE PHILS OF ACTION BEING TAKEN BY U.S.

6. IT IS NOW THREE DAYS SINCE I SENT PREVIOUS CABLE AND I HAVE YET TO RECEIVE ANY INDICATION THAT ACTION ADDRESSEES HAVE TURNED ATTENTION TO THIS ISSUE. EVEN
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IF COMPLETED ACTION IMPOSSIBLE AT THIS TIME, KINDLY SEND UP A FLARE SO THAT I WILL HAVE THE IMPRESSION SOMEONE IS THINKING OF US BACK THERE.
SULLIVAN

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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